

## Consensus Model for Decision-Making

The consensus process is a proven and effective model for group decision-making. It promotes group problem solving through creative consensus-building, and offers greater opportunities for the best possible agreements than the “majority rules” voting model (win-lose) of more traditional and formal rules.

### *Before the meeting:*

The facilitator, or identified “point person” for a particular proposal should, when applicable, contact, or make themselves available for contact by, relevant stakeholders in order to devise a preliminary proposal that takes account of the concerns of the group.

***Role of the facilitator:*** Keeps order, keeps the discussion on track, makes sure the discussion focuses on the merits of the arguments being made, summarizes the tentative agreements reached and tests for overwhelming agreement.

***Meeting Rules:*** The Consensus Model shall be the preferred decision-making model for the Best Practices Committee. This does NOT preclude a request to “suspend the rules” and ask for a majority vote to utilize Robert’s Rules of Order for part of, or the remainder of the meeting. The same procedure can be invoked for moving from Robert’s Rules to the Consensus Model.

1. Someone presents an idea. It could be a formal proposal, but most of the time it's just an idea, not yet fully formed. It does NOT need to be in the form of a motion, nor seconded for discussion.
2. The idea is passed around and the pros and cons are discussed.
3. As a result of the discussion — the more input, the better — the idea can be modified.
4. If a general agreement seems to be emerging, the facilitator tests for consensus by re-stating the latest version of the idea or proposal to see if everybody agrees.

5. If anyone dissents, the facilitator returns to the discussion to see if the idea/proposal can be further modified in order to make it acceptable to everyone. The facilitator shall encourage expression and examination of the concerns of dissenters. The facilitator tests for support for modifications. This test could include a “straw vote”.
6. The decision is “made” when the facilitator determines an “overwhelming majority” has been reached.
7. The facilitator, or a designee, shall write a summary highlighting points of agreement at the conclusion of the meeting.